

### REMARKS

This is a response to the Office Action mailed September 3, 2004. Claims 1-6 are pending. Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Klug (U.S. Patent No. 5,161,580). Claims 1, 2 and 4-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Klug.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejections. Claim 1 concerns a method of assembling a cable routing system including the step of providing a base element with a planar top surface having a linear mating edge on opposite sides of the planar surface. Each linear mating edge has a continuous cross-section along the length of each linear mating edge. Element 49 in Klug is a top cover for a T-connector 46. Element 49 includes periodically spaced Velcro pads 54 along each side edge. The Velcro pads 54 mate with Velcro pads 54 on other elements of the T-connector 46 as shown in Figure 2. Element 49 does not have a continuous cross-section along the length of each linear mating edge due to the presence of the spaced Velcro pads 54. One advantage of a continuous cross-section as provided in the recited base element is that the side elements are matable to the side edge without regard to aligning and mating discrete structures to one another. No such arrangement is shown in Figure 2.

Claim 1 also recites mounting a plurality of the side elements to the base element along the linear mating edges. A first plurality of the side elements have an upstanding wall portion extending to a vertical height above the planar top surface of the base element. Klug shows element 49 as being an uppermost portion of the T-connector as shown in Figure 2. Further, claim 1 recites a second plurality of side elements defining side exits extending transversely relative to the linear mating edges, and generally parallel to the planar top surface. There are no side exits associated with the T-connector of Figure 2 of Klug.

For these reasons, independent claim 1 and dependent claim 2 patentably distinguish the cited art.

Claim 3 recites a method of assembling a cable routing system including providing a base element with a planar top surface with first and second sides. Each of the sides has a continuous cross-section along the length of each side. As noted above, element 49 in Klug does not have a continuous cross-section along the length of each side. Instead, Klug has periodically spaced Velcro pads 54.

Claim 3 also recites selecting a plurality of mating elements from a group consisting of: mating base elements, upstanding wall elements, and side exit elements. The selected mating elements are mounted to the base element along the sides to form a cable routing system. The mating elements form a continuous surface along the sides of the base element. There is no mounting of a plurality of mating elements along each side of element 49 to form a continuous surface in the T-connector of Figure 2 of Klug. Cover 58 mounts to one edge of element 49 and side wall 48 mounts to an opposite edge of element 49. There are no further elements mounted to element 49. Specifically there are no mating base elements, upstanding wall elements, or side exit elements as recited by claim 3.

For these reasons, independent claim 3 and dependent claim 4 are patentably distinguished from the cited art.

Independent claim 5 concerns a method of assembling a cable routing system including the step of providing a plurality of rectangular base elements. There are no additional elements 49 or other rectangular elements taught or suggested by Klug. Claim 5 also recites that each of the base elements has a continuous cross-section in a direction parallel to the opposite sides. Element 49 includes Velcro pads 54 spaced along each edge.

Claim 5 also recites mounting the base elements together to form a base having a planar top surface including edges defined by one or more of the opposite sides and opposite ends of the base elements. Klug does not teach or suggest mounting any additional elements 49 together.

Claim 5 further recites mounting a plurality of side elements to the base along the opposite sides of the base elements wherein at least first and second side elements of the plurality of side elements include upstanding wall portions extending to a vertical height above the planar top surface of the base elements. Element 49 of Klug is shown as the uppermost portion of T-connector 46.

A third side element of the plurality of side elements recited by claim 5 includes a side exit defining a portion for exiting parallel to the planar top surface of the base. There is no side exit element in Figure 2 of Klug.

For these reasons, independent claim 5 and dependent claim 6 patentably distinguish the cited art.

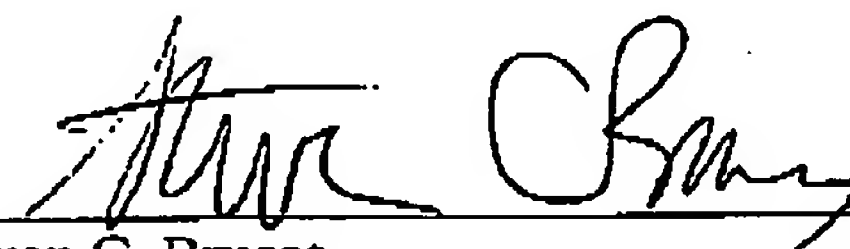
Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested and a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited. If a telephone conference would be helpful in resolving any issue, the Examiner is urged to contact the undersigned at the telephone number noted.

Respectfully submitted,

MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.  
P.O. Box 2903  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-0903  
(612) 332-5300

Date:

March 3, 2005

  
Steven C. Bruess  
Reg. No. 34,130  
SCB:PLSkaw